

January 22, 2014

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

I am filing for your consideration the attached proposal, entitled “An Act Granting, Updating, And Revising Defense Policies of the Commonwealth.”

The Massachusetts National Guard serves our Commonwealth with distinction, providing essential services in times of emergency. This bill modernizes the Guard’s governing statute, which was last revised in 1953, and brings Massachusetts into conformity with the overwhelming majority of states. This legislation will facilitate the work of the Guard and strengthen the Commonwealth's readiness and resiliency.

Specifically, this legislation:

- Streamlines the Guard’s organization to reflect modern deployments, including deployments in support of state emergency management and federal military missions, whether domestic or foreign.
- Expressly recognizes that the Guard may be deployed to counter threats to homeland security.
- Permits trained and certified military police to perform a law enforcement role when deployed in times of emergency and in support of state and local law enforcement — thus ensuring a comprehensive response when events require one.
- Removes outdated language.

Accordingly, I urge your prompt consideration and enactment of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,